

MODULE 4– MANAGING PHYSICAL RESOURCES

The thing I loved most about the library media program at Salem State was the lack of busy-work. It seemed like every class I took had information that I was immediately able to take back to the school library where I worked and put it to use. There was very little work for the sake of keeping busy. In that spirit, I bring you a fairly dense – but busywork free! – module that will present what was once an entire course called cataloging.

The thing about cataloging is that it is like having a baby or dancing. You can study it and be prepared for it, and you should be, particularly in the case of the baby. But in the end, you won't really understand it until you do it. The nice thing about cataloging (besides that fact that no one will videotape you doing it and insist on making you watch it over and over, which can happen in both of the other activities listed above) is that once you grasp the concepts it is really a simple process. And you don't necessarily have to have patience or talent. You just need to know where to look for information when you get stuck.

Much of the cataloging information you need is on the internet in some form or another. You can get MARC records from any public library's online public access catalog. You can get Dewey numbers from LibraryThing or a simple Google search, you can go to OCLC and see what subject headings others have used for the book. In new books, you can take advantage of the publishers cataloging information on the back of the title page (the verso). What you are going to learn in this module is what these things *mean* so that, while you don't have to be able to reinvent the wheel, you will have knowledge of what it is used for.

Therefore this module is essentially split into two parts. The first is the more passive part. You are going to be reading *Catalog It! A Guide to Cataloging School Library Materials* (second edition) by Allison Kaplan and Ann Riedling. This is a great overview of what you need to know and you will want to hang on to it to refer to it in your professional life. There are exercises in the book that I would like you to work through to make sure you can use the information you have read and there will also be some optional articles to read if you feel there is not enough fodder for discussion. Because cataloging in general doesn't make for very interesting discussion:

“Wow, this cataloging is very structured.”

“Yes, it is.”

“I agree as well.”

“I am sure glad we are learning it.”

This is far and away the module with the most straightforward reading. I urge you to pace yourselves the first two weeks because the information is manageable in small chunks, but will sort of begin to swim together if you decide take it on in huge marathon reading session. I can promise you that this is a very comprehensive and concise guide. You won't need to memorize the information; you just need to be able to remember the general concepts so that when they come up you will think, “I know I read about that in

the Kaplan book. Where did I put that? Here it is! Oh yes, I remember Barb saying I should hang on to it. I am so glad I listened to her. Here is the exact piece of information I needed. What a helpful woman. I should make her some cookies.” Or something like that.

Weeks 11 and 12: Catalog It!

Preparation: There is a list of items on page vii-viii that Kaplan and Riedling suggest you have on hand as you read the book. They are not necessary, but will enhance your learning.

Reading: Kaplan and Riedling 1-166 For discussion purposes, you should try to read up to page 89 for week 11 and pages 91-166 and go over the glossary for week 12.

What is so great about the Dewey Decimal System?

Articles on bookstore style organization.

Optional Exploration: Visit a library that uses the Dewey Decimal System. Try to get your hands on a copy of Dewey Decimal Classification Workbook and the Sears List of Subject Headings.

Assignment: The only assignment I will be checking (aside from the discussion) is your blog. You MUST post within each week a journal-style post on topics concerning the cataloging process.

There are exercises in the book on pages 59, 62, 63, 65, 88, 101, 110, 113, 118, 121, 122, 130, 136, 139 and 150. I urge you to work these through. They will not be turned in, but if you are able to do them, you will know that you have a real grasp of the content for this book.

Discussion: I will post some discussion topics for each week since these are fairly dry subjects.

Week 13: Online Public Access Catalogs

Reading: Kaplan and Riedling 167-172, 178-181.

Exploration: Breeding’s site on Library Automation Companies

Assignment: Interview a School Library Media Specialist to see what she is using for her OPAC. With what you learn in your interview develop a set of criteria for a school OPAC. With the perspective that her OPAC is your current OPAC, research a provider you think might work better from Breeding’s site. Write a proposal to your district to replace the current system. Or, if the system currently in use seems to be the best possible choice, pretend that the district is trying to force a change and lobby for your current system by comparing it to the proposed new one. Needless to say, if you are a LMS currently using an OPAC, you may interview yourself. Post your proposal on the class wiki.

Write in your blog about how you are going to reward yourself for doing so well in this course.

Discussion: Again, I will give you some discussion topics, but feel free to come up with your own.

Week 14: Cataloging Comparison

Reading: None, aren’t you thrilled?

Exploration: Look at one another’s presentations from week 13.

Assignment: Write a paragraph for each one commenting on the system (not the presentation – unless you want to say something nice about it) and choose the one (from everyone’s presentations) that you would finance if you were doing the paying write an “acceptance letter” telling why you chose that one.

Revisit your list of “Top 10 Things Teachers Should Know About Technology”. Edit it based on what you learned this course and post it to your blog.

Write in your blog about what you found most and least valuable about this course. [Be kind.]

Discussion: What did you like best and least about this course?